

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 066477
ORIGIN SS-25

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NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.

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S: PTARNOFF

EUR/CE:SKLINGAMAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE

INFO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 066477

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US, XF, SZ

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT
IN GENEVA

1. PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH APPROPRIATE SWISS FOREIGN
MINISTRY OFFICIAL TO EXPLAIN THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD PRO-
POSED TO PRESIDENT ASAD OF SYRIA THAT THEY MEET IN MAY
TO DISCUSS MIDDLE EAST ISSUES EITHER IN WASHINGTON OR IN
EUROPE. PRESIDENT ASAD ACCEPTED THE PROPOSAL, BUT INDI-
CATED HE WOULD FIND IT MORE CONVENIENT TO MEET WITH THE

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PRESIDENT IN EUROPE, EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S
PLANNED VISIT TO LONDON IN MAY FOR THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT
AND THE NATO MEETING.

2. WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH IN THE PAST FEW DAYS WITH THE
SYRIANS ABOUT AN APPROPRIATE SITE FOR THE MEETING AND WE
HAVE AGREED THAT GENEVA WOULD BE SUITABLE, IF THE SWISS

GOVERNMENT WOULD AGREE. THE TIME WOULD BE THE AFTERNOON AND EARLY EVENING OF MONDAY, MAY 9.

3. IN REQUESTING THE SWISS GOVERNMENT'S CONCURRENCE IN THIS ARRANGEMENT, EXPLAIN THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT, OR POSSIBLY THE CANTON OF GENEVA, HAS A SMALL CONFERENCE FACILITY, DESCRIBED AS A CHALET, ON THE SHORES

OF LAKE GENEVA WHICH IS FAIRLY CLOSE TO THE AIRPORT AND WHICH MIGHT BE SUITABLE FOR THE MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS.

4. EXPLAIN THAT WE WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR ANY SUGGESTIONS THE SWISS GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE, ALTHOUGH A DECISION WOULD BE SUBJECT TO A SURVEY OF THE SITE BY U.S. SECURITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE TEAMS. WE WOULD ALSO OF COURSE CONSULT WITH THE SYRIANS, WHOSE APPROVAL WILL BE NEEDED.

5. FYI: AMB. CATTO IS THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE SMALL CONFERENCE FACILITY DESCRIBED ABOVE. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE PALAIS OR ONE OF THE NEWER UN BUILDINGS MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE SITES, BUT WE WOULD PREFER THAT THE SWISS MAKE THE PROPOSALS. END FYI.

6. PLEASE STRESS NEED TO HOLD THIS INFORMATION CLOSELY UNTIL WE AND SYRIANS AGREE ON TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF THEIR MEETING.

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7. PRESIDENT CARTER WILL FLY TO GENEVA FROM LONDON FOR

MEETING AND RETURN TO LONDON SAME EVENING SO WILL NOT BE STAYING OVERNIGHT IN SWITZERLAND.
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